Linguistic Analyses of Speeches: Bill Clinton Versus George W. Bush

In this final project I would like to analyze two different speeches given by Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Specifically, I will be analyzing Bill Clinton’s speech as a response to the terrorist attack in Oklahoma City in 1995 and the speech of US President George W. Bush at a joint meeting at Congress after the terrorist attack in America on September 11, 2001. I will do two different analyses for each speech and I will compare and contrast them. My first analysis will be on semantics. I will analyze how both presidents use words and phrases. The second analysis will focus on pragmatics, and I will analyze how Bill Clinton and George W. Bush use language to communicate. I believe that these two speeches will be relevant to compare to each other because the speeches of both presidents are responses to a similar type of crime - a terrorist attack.

I will start with the semantics analysis of President Clinton’s speech. Bill Clinton's speech is full of metaphors - this is one of the most frequent tricks that he uses. The U.S. president resorts to metaphors in order to make his thoughts as accessible as possible to the audience because the speech spoken by Clinton is designed not only for the political elite, but also for ordinary people. For example, speaking about the duty to the victims after the terrorist attack, Clinton says “to purge ourselves of the dark forces” - two metaphors in one segment of the sentence. In addition to metaphors, the leader also uses epithets, which mainly appeals to the children who died in the terrorist attack. A striking example of the simultaneous usage of epithet and comparison is Clinton’s description of the tree he planted, symbolizing the life of a dead person. He says, 'It was a dogwood with its wonderful spring flower and its deep, enduring roots.' And then he adds, “That the life of a good person is like a tree whose leaf does not wither.” The combination of the lyric epithet with a detailed comparison fully reflects the president’s particular concern that there are not only adults who are suffering, but also children. In Bill Clinton's speech, one can notice the repeated use of metonymy. The president of the United States uses metonymy in order to emphasize the unity of the people, as for example, in the phrase 'Today our Nation joins with you in grief.' In this particular speech it is extremely rare for the American leader to resort to personification. In my opinion it is due to the fact that personification is usually used in order to make speech more lively and dynamic, which in this case would not be appropriate. Nevertheless, Clinton says, “sin took the lives,” emphasizing that the problem of terrorism is more relevant than ever. The speech of the US president is not full of allegories, but Clinton addresses them when he talks about things regarding ordinary people. For example, his phrase “to work hand in hand with you” reflects the fact that people of all professions such as officials, rescuers, and ordinary workers share the national grief. Every US citizen mourns and regrets; the whole nation aims to actively and painstakingly fight evil. Hyperbole is a technique that is popular in the speeches of politicians because it shows the importance of any aspect. It would be logical to assume that Clinton’s speech should be filled with hyperbolas, however this is not the case in this scenario. In this particular speech we can notice only a few cases of using this technique by a politician. Thus, Clinton, speaking of himself and his wife, emphasizes their equality with other people in every sense and associates this feeling with the best years of his life. He describes, “Hillary and I ... were your neighbors for some of the best years of our lives.” It is worth noting that the hyperbole in this case is related to the interaction of the leader and the people, and not to the tragedy that happened. Other paths, such as sarcasm, irony Clinton does

not use in view of the subject matter. Any humor in this case is not appropriate. Based on what has been described, it can be argued that Bill Clinton’s speech is filled with a variety of lexical techniques that reflect the leader’s main goals which is to eradicate any evil as much as possible and to force offenders to be punished for their crimes. It is important to note that the American politician correctly uses all kinds of paths: their use is appropriate, and the frequency of the paths is proportional to the most significant moments of the speech.

The second step in my final project will be the semantics analysis of the George W. Bush speech. President W. Bush’s speech uses a lot of metaphors. Interestingly, Bush uses metaphors to describe the extremely negative aspects of various issues. For example, he says “night fell on a different world,” “dark threat of violence,” the American leader emphasizes the problem of terrorism that has touched the United States. The metaphors used by Bush are hard to notice. He uses the expression, 'to hand over every terrorist,” which, being allegorical, is absolutely understandable to most people. Therefore, it can be noted that the president’s speech is focused on the public masses. He tries to make his speech understandable to ordinary people. Bush's speech also has more epithets than Clinton's. Bush uses epithets when describing situations with a positive connotation. For example, he says, “exceptional man,” referring to a man who was not afraid and tried to pursue the terrorists. He also says, “Peaceful morning,” which is talking about how an unexpected attack destroyed the peaceful city. Epithets are used by the American leader to recreate the picture of events; this is a verbalized way of displaying emotions.

It is worth noting that George W. Bush does not use comparisons in his speech, but often turns to metonymy. George W. Bush as well as Bill Clinton uses metonymy to emphasize the unity of the people. He says “our enemy is every government that supports terrorists,” and focuses on the fact that we will fight all together against the governments that support terrorists. He also says “we ask every nation to join us,” thus trying to unite people to fight against terrorism together. George W. Bush does not use personification or allegories in his speech, possibly because the use of such methods is not appropriate in this type of situation. Similarly, it is important to note that Clinton in his speech does not abuse the use of allegories and personifications as well. Talking about international relations, Bush resorts to the use of hyperbole. He calls the UK 'the most faithful friend of the United States.' It is interesting that the usage of hyperbola in this case is non-standard, since Bush uses it in negative form. Bush emphasizes, “America has no truer friend than Great Britain.” Perhaps this variation of exaggeration is used to attract and retain the attention of the public. Thus, George W. Bush’s speech from the point of view of using lexical techniques can be called clear and concise. During his speech, the use of expressive methods is not apparently noticeable, however, these methods are not completely absent. Bush’s speech can be called emotionally restrained, however, this fact does not detract from the level of speech effectiveness in general.

In this part of my project I will switch to the pragmatics analysis of the two speeches given by two heads of America- Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. The use of different methods to achieve certain goals in the process of speaking is an integral part of a successful speech. The relationship between the meaning of words, the speakers’ intentions, circumstances, and ultimately their actions can be analyzed through field of pragmatics. Often, words can be utilized to manipulate message. And speakers in all social spheres have resorted to these techniques. This is due to the fact that the stylistic features of the language can enhance the influence of the speaker on the audience. This aspect is especially relevant for political speeches, the purpose of which is not only to influence listeners, but also to partially manipulate their thoughts and

actions.

I will start with the speech of Bill Clinton again. The US president uses a lot of manipulative techniques in this particular speech. Clinton often turns to anaphora - a stylistic method for the unanimity of phrases. Political leaders, in their speeches, often resort to this method, since the use of anaphora in public speaking makes it possible to focus attention on any information at a particular moment. As an example, consider Clinton's appeal to the Americans: "We mourn with you. We share your hope against hope that some may still survive. We thank all those who have worked so heroically to save lives and to solve this crime ... "Let us pay attention to the use of the pronoun" we ": this method not only guarantees focus of the audience on the problem, but also emphasizes the unity of the nation. By the way, all Clinton's appeals to the people are more focused on emphasizing the moment of collectivity and unity. Of course, the issue of terrorist attack is put by the leader in the first place, however, followed by a call for the unity of the American people.

Epiphora is a technique opposite, but adjacent to anaphore. The president uses this technique twice in his speech, in the middle and at the end of the speech. Epiphora is able to add brightness, expression, and sharpness to the speech. With the help of epiphora, speakers are able to emphasize any points in the speech, attracting the attention of the audience. So Clinton emphasizes the negative attitude of Americans to any violence and cruelty. He says: "When there is talk of hatred, let us stand up and talk against it. When there is talk of violence, let us stand up and talk against it. ' Pay attention to the successful combination of anaphora and epiphora. Small in number of words, but capacious in meaning. These sentences especially accurately reflect the position of America regarding any evil.

Clinton repeatedly uses a technique called inversion. For example, he focuses on the degree of significance of the tragedy in Oklahoma for the state. The American leader emphasizes: 'So this morning before we got on the plane to come here, at the White House, we planted that tree in honor of the children of Oklahoma.' Therefore, the main inversion function here is emotionally evaluative, since the order in which words are placed in a segment of speech is directly related to their significance in it, according to the author. President Clinton also used a technique which is called parallelism in his speech once.

This technique makes speech structured, logical, which is why politicians use this stylistic figure in their speeches. Clinton's use of parallelism can be seen in the above example of combining anaphora and epiphora. In Clinton's speech, we meet the president's use of the asindeton. Its main goal is to create rhythm. "They are forces that threaten our common peace, our freedom, our way of life," says the leader about all manifestations of hostility in the world. This idea is important, it becomes the cause of events in Oklahoma City, so Clinton mentions it without further explanation, while maintaining clarity and clarity of thought. In his speech, the American president does not use ellipsis, a rhetorical question, an oxymoron. These methods of speech are quite effectively being used by other politicians. However, the fact that Clinton refused such stylistic devices does not diminish the degree of significance and success of his speech. The methods that Clinton includes in his speech are used by Clinton absolutely correctly.

Let's now move on to the pragmatics analysis of George W. Bush's speech. First of all, we note that the speech of the American leader includes a whole range of stylistic techniques used in political discourse. In his speech, Bush often resorts to gradation in several variations: ascending and descending. By ascending and descending gradation, I mean the arrangement

of the elements of a text’s utterance in the order of their increasing or decreasing significance. An example is Bush's mention of Tom Ridge, a US security man. Here's how the American leader talks about him: '... a military veteran, an effective governor, a true patriot, a trusted friend - Pennsylvania's Tom Ridge.' We can observe the upward gradation used to emphasize the dignity of a person, his status and achievements. Bush's downward gradation is used to reflect the life of the people of Afghanistan: “Women are not allowed to attend school. You can be jailed for owning a television. Religion can be practiced only as their leaders dictate. A man can be jailed in Afghanistan if his beard is not long enough. ' This type of gradation is usually used to emphasize the negative aspects of a phenomenon. This stylistic device helps to capture the highest or lowest quality point of any aspect in the audience’s memory. As we know, vivid examples are always stored in a person’s memory more successfully than primitive ones. Thus, in a person’s mind due to gradation, any necessary fact or phenomenon can be fixed.

In Bush’s speech, a single inversion can be seen. This technique performs its classic function here - focusing on the circumstances in which an event occurs. Bush says: 'By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions - by abandoning every value except the will to power - they follow in the path of fascism, and Nazism, and totalitarianism.' Certainly, the most important fragments of a statement are not just put by the American leader in the initial segment of speech: these are the very conditions under which fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism live. Anaphora, like epiphora, is used everywhere in Bush’s speech. Thus, the audience’s attention is focused on certain aspects of the speech more than once, especially when the president combines both anaphora and epiphora in one statement. Bush uses an interesting variation of the epiphora - its alteration, which makes the speech diverse, eliminates its monotony: “This is not, however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is world fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom. ' An additional function of the alternating epiphora is to create a contrast of the endings of expressions, which is necessary for the strongest emotional perception of ideas by the audience.

In contrast to Clinton, Bush is avoiding the usage of asyndeton by using polysyndeton. Bush has resorted to the reception once, speaking about America, and its strengths: 'America is successful because of the hard work, and creativity, and enterprise of our people.' The use of polysyndeton helps the speaker create a positive atmosphere, especially if the multi-union is accompanied by increasing importance of additions, definitions or circumstances. Bush's favorite stylistic device, is parallelism. The usage of it can be traced throughout the president’s speech. Parallelism creates structured, logical, and consistent speech. There is a unique moment in Bush’s speech when the American leader combines three stylistic devices in one piece of speech - anaphora, epiphora and parallelism: “If anybody thinks that Americans are mostly mean and selfish, they ought to come to Oklahoma. If anybody thinks Americans have lost the capacity for love and caring and courage, they ought to come to Oklahoma. ' The combination of techniques provides a highly emotional expression that expresses feelings, provides facts and evaluates the situation at the same time.

Bush repeatedly uses rhetorical questions, a stylistic device that gives the speaker the opportunity to attract the attention of the audience and calls for consideration of the actual problem. The rhetorical question gives expressiveness and emotionality to the speech. The American leader asks, “Why do they hate us?” On one hand, Bush answers the question, however, the numerous pauses in his speech ultimately leave the question open. George W. Bush and Bill Clinton do not use oxymoron or ellipsis in their speeches. Bush does not use

oxymorons because there is a very small chance that will be appropriate in this context. Thus, George W. Bush’s speech can be called not only successful, but also rich in emotional and meaningful sentences. Each of the aspects above harmoniously complement each other and provide the American people with a picture of what is happening in a way that is accessible to the average person. On the international stage, the American people are indifferent to the problem of terrorism.

The speech of a political leader is an important component of his image. The speaker’s verbal image is formed due to its speech components, including diction, voice, intonation, competent speech and a combination of its features. Each of the American leaders we have examined has his own special speech vision that explains the use of certain verbal techniques and manipulative strategies. Presidents influence the consciousness and thoughts of listeners, attract the attention of the audience and, as a result, achieve their goals.The main function of stylistic figures in political rhetoric is the creation of expressive speech. Their appropriate use is the key to effective political speech, the result of which is successful contact with the audience and partial manipulation of it. Clinton's speech includes most of the basic stylistic techniques of oratory that he correctly used with the exception of ellipsis, polysyndeton, and the rhetorical question. The performance of George W. Bush is distinguished by emotionality and logic due to the use of different variants of gradations and parallelisms, respectively. This makes it possible to influence both the American people and the international arena. A full-fledged influence of a politician on an audience is impossible without the use of certain types, strategies and techniques of language influence. All the analyzed speeches of American leaders belong to the political form of manipulation.

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